

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4, 6, and 8-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,726,300 to Schloeman et al (“Schloeman”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,375,295 to Ghozeil et al (“Ghozeil”). The Examiner has also rejected claims 7, 11, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schloeman in view of Ghozeil, and further in view of JP 2000-158643 to Imai et al (“Imai”). In addition, the Examiner has objected to Claim 5 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, Examiner has conceded that Claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, the limitations of Claim 5 have been incorporated into independent claims 1 and 10. Claims 1-4 and 6-12 are currently pending. The following remarks are considered by applicant to overcome each of the Examiner's outstanding rejections to current claims 1-4 and 6-12. An early Notice of Allowance is therefore requested.

I. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-4 AND 6-12

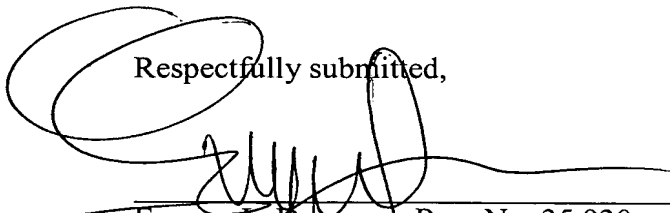
On page 7 of the current office action, the Examiner has indicated that Claim 5 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 5 depends directly from independent Claim 1. Applicant has therefore amended independent Claim 1 so that it includes the language of Claim 5. Applicant has also amended the only other independent claim, Claim 10, so that it also included the language of Claim 5 that Examiner has indicated is allowable.

As such, Applicant respectfully asserts that independent claims 1 and 10, and corresponding claims 2-4, 6-9, and 11-12 because they are dependent from either Claim 1 or Claim 10, are now all in allowable form. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that Examiner remove the various rejections of claims 1-4 and 6-10.

Based upon the above remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a

telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact him at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



Eugene LeDanne - Reg. No. 35,930
REEDSMITH LLP
599 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Tel.: 212.521.5400

ED:JWT

501646.20004